

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

### **LISTING OF CLAIMS**

1. (Currently amended) A vehicle accessory mounting assembly comprising:
  - a vehicle accessory, said accessory having at least one bracket joining zone;
  - a mounting bracket having at least one accessory joining zone, ~~and at least one vehicle attachment zone;~~
  - ~~a vehicle, said vehicle having at least one corresponding accessory joining zone;~~
  - a first means of joining the bracket joining zone to the accessory joining zone, wherein the first means of joining comprises at least one means from the group consisting of forming, welding, bonding, taping, mechanical joining, or taper locking, wherein
  - ~~a second means of joining the vehicle attachment zone to a vehicle, wherein the second means of joining comprises at least one means from the group consisting of forming, welding, bonding, taping, mechanical joining, or taper locking;~~
  - a said means of joining said bracket joining zone to said ~~mounting bracket~~ accessory joining zone ~~precisely utilizing~~ utilizes datum locators, said datum

locators providing and maintaining the precise alignment and orientation of said vehicle accessory and said mounting bracket during assembly.

~~a means of joining the vehicle attachment zone to a vehicle precisely utilizing datum locators.~~

2. (Withdrawn) A vehicle accessory mounting assembly comprising:  
a vehicle accessory, said accessory having at least one vehicle joining zone;  
a vehicle, said vehicle having at least one corresponding accessory joining zone;  
a means of joining the vehicle joining zone to the accessory joining zone, wherein said means of joining comprises at least one means from the group consisting of forming, welding, bonding, taping, mechanical joining, or taper locking;  
a means of joining the vehicle joining zone to the accessory joining zone, precisely utilizing datum locators.

3. (New) A means of attaching an accessory to a vehicle mounting bracket comprising:

a vehicle accessory, said accessory having at least one bracket joining zone comprising at least one deformable protrusion;  
a mounting bracket for attaching said accessory to a vehicle, said bracket having at least one accessory joining zone and at least one receiving aperture corresponding to said at least one deformable protrusion;

a means of joining the bracket joining zone to the accessory joining zone,  
utilizing forming,

wherein said means of joining said bracket joining zone to said accessory joining utilizes at least one pair of corresponding datum locators, said datum locators positioned on said accessory and said bracket providing and maintaining the precise alignment and orientation of said vehicle accessory and said mounting bracket during joining so as to position said protrusion at least partially through said aperture, said joining further comprising the application of a support means to a back side of said joining zone, and the application a forming tool to a back side of said bracket, said forming tool deforming the protrusion into a flange around said aperture when force is applied toward said support means, thereby permanently joining said accessory to said bracket.